50 WAYS OF COOKING VEGETABLES IN INDIA

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FIFTY WAYS OF COOKING VEGETABLES IN INDIA

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BY

MARGERY BRAND

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50 WAYS OF COOKING VEGETABLES (IN INDIA)

THERE is so much ignorance and prejudice about the common or garden vegetable that can be bought in any Indian market. Some of these vegetables have been so maligned for years that most people shudder at the mere name, and refuse to have them under any conditions. Take for instance the Egg Plant or Aubergine (Indian name Brinjal) and Lady's Fingers or Okra (Gumbo the Americans Call it) are only two examples of sheer neglect. Both these vegetables are easy to cook and are a veritable gold mine in vitamins. Sorrel too is to be found in India (Khatti Bahji Indian name) and dearly loved by the French for soup. The classical French Sorrel soup is delicious and is cooked like spinach. Mention is made of these three vegetables as it is seldom, if ever, that one is not able to buy these particular vegetables in the Indian markets, when more well known ones are scarce.

As regards cooking vegetables these

few stern rules in the kitchen will help results.

Never leave boiled vegetables to stand at the back of the fire when cooked.

Never squash them brutally in the colander where they should gently drain.

Never mash potatoes with *cold* milk, always hot.

Never throw vegetable water away, but to keep it for soups, gravy etc.

Never use soda for cauliflower and cabbage to enhance their colour.

Always soak vegetables for half an hour in salt water before preparing.

Always "Pinky" (permagnate of potash two crystals, in three pints of water well shaken) green vegetables to make sure they are free from germs.

Always cook vegetables in enamel whenever possible.

Always time your vegetables for cooking so as they will be ready in time without reheating them for a second time.

Always cook green vegetables in fast boiling water without the cover on the vessel.

(1)

AUBERGINE OR EGG PLANT

(INDIAN NAME 'BRINJAL')

PEEL two fairly large egg plants and cut into dice, slice a small onion and two or three green peppers or pimentoes which you cook along with the diced egg plant in 2 ounces of butter and one tablespoonful of water. Season with salt and pepper, and a dash of cayenne, mixing well the whole time with a wooden spoon. Serve hot with sprigs of parsley as a garnish.

(2)

STUFFED AUBERGINES

CUT this vegetable into half, lengthwise, after removing stalk and seeds. Scoop out the inside, simmer the halves in butter until tender. Place on a baking dish and fill them with well seasoned meat mince, sprinkle with cheese, and breadcrumbs, and bake until brown. Serve with a good tomato sauce.

(3)

AUBERGINE WITH TOMATO SAUCE

SLICE the vegetables in fairly thick slices very evenly and cook in a casserole dish with a little water and a dot of butter, pepper and salt. In the meanwhile fry in a little butter a bunch of spring onions (the green part as well) cut in fine pieces. When the onions are tender add a small bunch of chopped parsley, and cook until crisp, but still retaining its green colour. To this add a cup of well made Tomato Soup or sauce. Strain off some of the water from the Aubergine and pour over them this onion sauce and continue cooking very gently for another 10 minutes. Garnish round this dish some well grilled tomatos, and serve hot.

(4)

GLOBE ARTICHOKE

SOAK the artichokes for four hours in cold water having cut the stalk off level so the artichoke stands up. Rub the end with a slice of lime. Put them into a pan of cold water with some salt and pepper corns and a pinch of carbonate of soda and one teaspoonful of lard. Bring to the boil and let it simmer for 3 hours. When done remove outer leaves and throw away the hairy "choke" at the base of the artichoke. Replace the leaves as nature grew them and pour on a little butter flavoured with lemon juice. Also serve a separate boat of melted butter well seasoned.

(5)

SOUFFLÈ OF GLOBE ARTICHOKES

COOK as in previous recipe keeping only the base of the artichokes. Heat them in a little stock, remove when warmed through and put them in the bottom of a soufflè cheese mixture. Bake for 15 minutes until a light brown. To make the soufflè mixture melt one tablespoonful of flour and 2 ozs butter, then add a little milk and the yolks of two eggs, pepper and salt, and a little cream. Add the whites of the eggs beaten stiff to the mixture, and also some grated cheese to taste and a mustard spoonful of made mustard.

(6)

THE ROOT ARTICHOKE

MORE often than not called the "Jerusalem Artichoke". Here is a delicious way of cooking this not very prepossessing vegetable. Peel 2 lbs. of artichokes and cut into thin slices, also an onion sliced finely. Cook both in 2 ozs butter until slightly brown, add a clove of garlic and a bunch of parsley and mint; all these three to be removed before serving. Also a little salt and black pepper. Cover this with a good clear stock and let it simmer until tender. Strain the artichokes and serve very hot.

(7)

ARTICHOKE ROOSEVELT SALAD

SLICE some cooked artichokes in thin slices and some apples, add some crisp lettuce leaves, a few chopped walnuts, a few grated cloves and coarse black pepper also some nasturtium leaves. Cover with a delicate mayonnaise dressing, which you have made a green colour by using pressed spinach for colouring, or instead, just add a puree of fresh Indian corn. Cover the salad quickly before the apple blackens. Serve very cold.

(8)

ARTICHOKE MOUSSE

THIS is good served as a separate dish :— Boil two pounds of peeled Jerusalem artichokes and one onion in milk until tender. Remove any milk liquid and then dry in a cloth. Pass the vegetable through a hair sieve. Beat 4 eggs thoroughly and add to the artichoke purèe, season well with salt and pepper, and 2 ozs. thick cream. Butter a soufflè dish, put at the bottom a piece of buttered paper to help in turning it out. Steam very gently for an hour. Make a sauce by using the milk the artichoke was cooked in—thickened with flour and butter (cooked together first of all; the base of all white sauces) flavour with curry powder, or tomato purèe and keep warm until the mousse is ready. Turn it out and pour over this sauce. Serve hot.

(9)

ARTICHOKE SOUP

PEEL the Jerusalem artichokes, keeping them under water while doing so, so as they will not discolor. Place in boiling salted water and cook until tender for twenty to thirty minutes. Strain thoroughly. Place in a basin, add a lump of butter and beat until it is well mashed. Stir in enough milk to make it semi fluid and reheat slowly. Add grated nutmeg if liked just before serving, or a blob of cream on which some chopped parsley has been sprinkled.

(10)

BROAD BEANS

SHELL a pound of broad beans. After cooking the beans, skin and cook for 10 minutes and drain. Fry some bacon cubes until golden brown, add a little stock (which you have thickened after it has been brought to the boil) also a little cream, salt, and pepper and the beans, and serve very hot. This is a good way of serving broad beans when they are not very young.

(11)

FRENCH BEANS

THIS vegetable is seldom cooked with care. It is a mistake to cut them fine, so that each pod is cut through. Much of the mineral salts are lost when cooking them this way. Soak the beans in ice cold water for an hour before preparing them, this stiffens the bean and all you do is to cut off the stringy sides and ends. Tie them into bundles of 10 to 15 and boil very fast in salted water for 20 minutes without the lid on the saucepan. This is one of the few vegetables to which one may be permitted to add the minutest pinch of soda to preserve the colour. Drain carefully, remove string, so as not to disturb the bunch and arrange on a dish; bunches in line. Add a few dots of butter, salt and pepper and serve hot. You can add to this dish by pouring a sauce over the beans which you have made by boiling one cup of cream in a double boiler and when hot add yolks of 2 eggs well beaten with salt and pepper. Stir this until it thickens adding a lump of butter before pouring the sauce over the beans.

(12)

BEETROOT

THIS can be a perfect vegetable if only it is *not boiled.* When this is done, the vegetable sodium content which it contains is just thrown away. They are delicious if cooked in grease proofed paper in a casserole dish, with the stem left on and only lightly scrubbed. Eaten hot with melted butter, they are a delight or cooked in cinders too, like a baked potato and served hot in a folded napkin, seeing that the skin is not bruised. As a salad it is best shredded very fine in the raw state—a decorative and valuable salad if kept away from the vinegar bottle. The leaves of the beetroot too can be used if steamed and chopped up fine, and mixed with spinach, or left to get cold and served as a salad dressed with lemon juice, honey, and oil, well shaken together, then decorated with thin slices of hard boiled egg.

(13)

BRUSSEL SPROUTS

THIS vegetable is not seen often enough in India except in the hills. It is a great delicacy and deserves careful cooking in the same way as cabbage or just steamed in an earthenware casserole with butter, salt and pepper. A good rich beef gravy can be served with it. No fancy cooking for this fine vegetable and never use soda to enhance its colour.

(14)

CABBAGE

THERE is only one way to cook cabbage, many scientific people have spent time perfecting this culinary operation and the following is what has been gleaned from many books. These hints should be adhered to strongly, to gain perfection. Wash the cabbage in several basins of cold salt water; throw away any old leaves and tough stems and cut into quarters. Put this into a saucepan of rapidly boiling salted water and *on no account* use any kind of soda as it destroys the flavour and vitamins in the cabbage. Keep the lid off the saucepan and do not boil for longer than 15 minutes. Take out and drain gently removing all the superfluous water, and serve at once. It has been proved conclusively that rapid, brief cooking preserves the valuable vitamin C in this vegetable.

(15)

A GOOD AMERICAN WAY OF COOKING CABBAGE

CUT young cabbages into halves, and boil rapidly in boiling salt water for 5 minutes or so. Drain and put back into the saucepan. Pour over some fresh boiling water add salt and a little sugar and cook with the lid off until just tender. Drain and chop and just before serving pour over some melted butter to which a dessert spoonful of piquant sauce has been added and some coarse pepper.

(16)

A MALTESE CABBAGE RECIPE

FRY one small clove of garlic in a little lard or dripping, until brown. Add the cabbage which has been washed, soaked and chopped finely as for pickling, add enough water to prevent burning and a pinch of salt. Cook for 10 minutes. This is a delicious way of cooking cabbage.

(17)

RED CABBAGE

CUT up a red cabbage in very fine slices and stew it with 2 ozs. lard, 3 apples cut in quarters and some sliced onions until all are tender. Add a table-spoonful of vinegar, a pinch of salt and one teaspoonful of sugar. Stew for another half hour and serve hot.

(18)

CABBAGE SOUP

BOIL together a large white cabbage with two skinned tomatos, one onion, some bay leaves, pepper and salt, also two ozs. pork, a little stock, and half a pound of beef cut in cubes. Boil thoroughly for 2 hours and serve very hot handing some sour cream separately in a bowl which may be added to the soup, according to taste.

(19)

CARROTS BELGIQUE

COOK some young carrots in a little water after they have been scraped and dried. When quite tender strain and pour over them a sauce made of 4 ozs. butter, 4 tablespoonful cream, a wine glass of cider and a little shredded lemon juice. Reheat the carrots in this sauce for 10 minutes.

(20)

CARROTS SUPERFINE

BLANCH about 1½ lbs. tender young carrots in scalding water, then scrape off their skins. Trim them into neat slices about half an inch thick. Fry these with 4 ozs. butter and 3 ozs. minced onion. When all the vegetables have formed a golden colour, season with salt, sugar and pepper. Cover with hot stock and let it come to the boil. After that it must only simmer gently, shake the pan occasionally to ensure even cooking, when tender, let cool and skim off the liquid into another pan. Separate 2 yolks of eggs from the whites and add a little of the liquid and stir this into the carrots very gently over a low fire. Add 1 oz. butter or cream and a little chopped parsley. Serve very hot.

(21)

CASSEROLE OF CARROTS

PUT raw carrots through a mincer or grate very coarsely, then into a casserole dish with a little pepper and salt and 3 or 4 pats of butter and two tablespoonfuls of hot water. Cover and put into the oven. Carrots take less time to cook this way and when ready to serve none of the flavour is lost.

(22)

CARROT FRITTERS

THIS method is more interesting than usual. Just boil or steam young carrots until tender, cut into large slices and fry in the best olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, and serve hot on a paper D'oyley.

(23)

CAULIFLOWER GOWANLEA

CHOOSE a very firm white cauliflower, cut off a small piece of white and lay it aside. Boil the remainder in the usual way until very tender. Remove from pan and pass the flower parts through a fine sieve. Mix with this 3 egg yolks well beaten and season with salt and pepper. Then fold in the whites which have been stiffly beaten. Turn all this into a buttered pyres dish arranging the boiled green leaves around the sides and a layer of chopped mushrooms at the bottom. Bake in a very hot oven for 10 minutes until a golden brown. Pour over just before serving a cheese sauce and the piece of raw cauliflower finely grated also a few pecan nuts or pine needle nuts. Garnish this dish with bunches of parsley and serve hot. You can omit the mushrooms if none are available.

(24)

CAULIFLOWER JESMOND

BOIL a cauliflower in salt water and break it into bits after straining off the water. Grease a fireproof dish and arrange in it the cauliflower and some tomato sauce in layers. Sprinkle with cheese, some chopped mushrooms which have been previously cooked in butter and some small pieces of cooked sweetbread. The last layer should be tomato sauce, grated cheese and a few nobs of butter. Bake for 20 minutes. Serve with watercress as a garnish.

(25)

CELERY

THIS is best served very crisp and cold in its natural state, in tall glasses to be eaten throughout a meal, but it can be boiled whole when too coarse for eating raw. Cut off the tops and roots and boil in salt water until tender, cover with a good white sauce.

(26)

BOILED CORN COBS

(INDIAN MAIZE)

AMERICA favours this vegetable and rightly so. When they are young and tender, the best way to eat them is on the cob, plainly cooked in a pan of boiling salted water for 45 minutes. Remove from the water, heap on to a hot dish and each person is given a small dish of melted butter seasoned with pepper and salt in which you dip the cob. It may not be an elegant dish, but you can remove the corn by scraping it off the cob. An epicure prefers to hold it in both hands, biting into the succulent cob.

(27)

CORN FRITTERS

BOIL cobs as in previous recipe, scrape off the flesh. Add to this one beaten egg (Yolks and whites together) then a tablespoonful of melted butter and flour mixed together. When you get the right consistency season well with salt and pepper. Put a spoonful of the batter at a time in boiling oil and fry a golden brown. Excellent with grilled chicken, or serve as a dish by itself.

(28)

ELLIOT'S CUCUMBER MOULD

2 lbs. Cucumber.
½ cup Vinegar.
Salt and Pepper.
2 teaspoons Gelatine.
Green colouring.

Pass Cucumber through a mincer, with a little salt, and draw off surplus water. Heat vinegar, dissolve gelatine in it, and add this with pepper to the cucumbers. Colour lightly, and mould. Good with cold meat, fish or chicken and very cool looking in hot weather.

(29)

STUFFED CUCUMBERS WITH GREEN PARSLEY

PEEL the cucumber and cook for 15 minutes in salt water. Halve them and remove the seeds. Stuff with the following mixture. 2 mashed hard boiled eggs and the crumbs of a slice of white bread that has been soaked in milk or stock; 2 ozs. minced bacon, a little grated cheese and a few boiled and ground almonds. All bound together with a raw egg and a dash of nutmeg, salt and pepper. Fasten the halves together and wrap them up in vine or lettuce leaves, put them with pats of butter into a fire proof dish. Bake for an hour and serve with a green sauce which you make by boiling a bunch of parsley in a little stock for a few minutes, then chop and cook in 3 ozs. butter adding salt and lemon juice.

(30)

CUCUMBER SALAD

THIS is at it's best if you slice it finely, sprinkle with salt and leave for two hours on ice. Remove the liquid caused by the salt and pour over lemon juice or good vinegar and coarse black pepper.

(31)

LEEKS

THIS vegetable can be plainly boiled and served with melted butter and chopped parsley as a sauce, either served separately or poured over the vegetable.

(32)

HELLAYAR'S CORNISH LEEK PIE

CUT the leeks into rounds and boil until tender. Drain, and put in a buttered pie dish with salt and pepper and two slices of bacon, cut into pieces. Beat well together 2 eggs, mix with a breakfast cup full of milk and pour over the leeks. Cover with a short crust, bake and serve hot.

(33)

LADY'S FINGERS OR OKRA

THIS is a delicious vegetable if cooked properly and unlike the lukewarm, glutinous mess, as it mostly appears from mediocre kitchens.

Well wash the vegetable, remove the stem and cut in fine slices. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Fry some finely chopped onions in butter. Add a few sprigs of thyme, parsley, bayleaf and one small chilli and about 6 chopped tomatoes and the sliced Okra; When well browned, add hot water and simmer for 1½ hours. Okra should be only cooked in enamel saucepans, never metal of any kind. Serve with this some fried croutons of bread.

(34)

OKRA GULLILAND

SERVE this vegetable like asparagus, either hot or cold with a Hollandaise sauce. Boil the vegetable in salted water to which you have added a bunch of herbs, parsley, mint etc. Strain and put on an asparagus dish handing the Hollandaise sauce separately. To make this sauce put 2 ozs. butter in a saucepan with 2 yolks of eggs and one tablespoonful of fresh lime juice. Place this saucepan in a larger one containing boiling water. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until butter is melted. Then add 2 ozs. more of butter and when that melted add another 2 ozs. When it has thickened add salt and pepper. If this happens to curdle beat well and add 2 tablespoonfuls of cream or boiling water.

(35)

OKRA (OR LADY'S FINGERS) SOUP

BOIL about 1 lb. of Okra. Remove the pods. Well drain from moisture. Add these to stock in which you have cooked 6 tomatos after removing their skins and seeds. Serve very hot and hand with it plain boiled rice. The flesh of this vegetable not required for this soup need not be wasted but kept for a curry or in a chicken stew.

(36)

GREEN PEAS

THESE are best, naturally when cooked straight away after being picked, though this is not always possible. If you insist on boiling them, instead of steaming, have as little water as possible salted with a sprig of mint and a pinch of sugar, and cook as fast as possible. Drain and add butter *off* the fire as this toughens, then serve hot removing the mint.

(37)

PEAS WITH TOAST PUFFS

THIS is a very old recipe and very good. Shell 2 lbs. young peas and cook gently in half milk and half water in a fairly large saucepan. Season well with salt and pepper, a teaspoonful of sugar, a sprig of fresh mint and a knob of butter. The liquid should cover the peas. Cut a slice of bread into dice and fry them crisp in butter. Fry a tablespoonful of finely chopped spring onion in butter also. Make a thick batter with 1 egg and 2 tablespoonfuls of flour, salt, pepper and milk. Make the batter several hours before required. Put the fried bread and fried onion into the batter and beat together. When the peas are nearly done, pour teaspoonfuls of the batter mixture into the hot liquid and peas and cook for another 10 to 15 minutes, by which time the batter swelled into puffs will be thoroughly cooked inside. Served with a dish of young buttered carrots, this makes a very satisfying meal.

(38)

POTATOES

THIS common vegetable is best steamed "in their jackets" or baked in an oven or in hot cinders after the potatoes have been scrubbed gently. If they *must be* boiled, plunge them into boiling water and keep simmering until cooked, then put in a colander and cover with a napkin for a few minutes, this makes them floury if they are old potatoes. Sprinkle with parsley and a little butter, pepper and salt and serve hot. Above all do not reheat a boiled potato unless you are going to mash them to make a puree, then they are mashed through a large sieve and put into hot milk to which you have added a pat of butter and do not be afraid to beat your puree until it is very creamy, and again the golden rule of serving hot.

(39)

POTATO LYONNAISE

SLICE some three quarter boiled potatoes and brown in butter quickly and then continue to cook slowly. In another frying pan brown some sliced onions slightly, add to the potatoes, stirring often so they do not stick to the pan. When ready add chopped parsley just before serving.

(40)

SOUFFLÈ POTATOES

PEEL some sound potatoes in very regular thin slices. Wash in ice cold water and drain thoroughly. Plunge into deep fat only moderately hot. Increase the heat after the potatoes have been put into the fat and cook without stirring for five minutes. They should rise to the surface. Take them out and drain them and plunge into a second pan of *very hot fat* when they commence to swell. Leave them for a second, remove and drain on tissue paper to dry them. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve hot.

(41)

PUMPKIN PIE: THE AMERICAN WAY

CUT a pumpkin into pieces after peeling, cook or steam in a very little water, then drain mash and strain. Measure about 2 cups of this pulp, add one cup of cream, 1 tablespoonful of brown sugar, two eggs, salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful ginger powder, 2 teaspoonfuls cinnamon powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful grated nutmeg. Beat all this together for two minutes. Pour into a dish which has been lined with short pastry cook for 15 minutes in a hot oven and then reduce heat and bake slowly for three quarters of an hour in a moderate oven. Sprinkle fine castor sugar on top before serving and serve with cream, to which you have added small pieces of chopped candied ginger.

(42)

PUMPKIN OR SQUASH

(VEGETABLE MARROW)

THIS easy soup is very good and easily digested. Cook a pumpkin removing skin and chop finely. Infuse an onion stuck with cloves in a pan of boiling milk for about 10 minutes. Strain the milk over the pumpkin, thicken with butter worked in with flour and season well with salt and pepper and celery salt. Simmer all together very gently for 10 minutes. Serve piping hot.

(43)

PARSNIPS AND CREAM

SCRAP, peel and boil some parsnips in milk—not fast, just keep the liquid trembling, when half done, slice them across and down and put into a mixture of broth and cream in equal quantities and continue very slow cooking.

(44)

SPINACH

THIS superb vegetable needs more attention than it usually gets because of its value in mineral contents. It is rich in vitamin A, B and C, but especially A. The French people call it the Stomach's Broom! No soggy rubbish (usually detested by children) for them! Appetisingly cooked and the demand is "Spinach for all".

SPINACH AU BRANCHE

WELL wash the leaves in salt water. Pick out the perfect leaves with branches intact, put in an enamel pan with a very little water with the tiniest pinch of soda (only to improve the colour) and simmer very gently. When cooked drain well and add a lump of butter, coarse pepper and a dash of nutmeg. Serve hot, do not chop on any account so as to justify its name.

(45)

SPINACH SOUFFLÈ

COOK as before, remove stalks, chop, put through a sieve. Make an ordinary soufflè and add to the sieved spinach with salt and pepper, about three eggs will be sufficient for a pound of spinach. Add some grated cheese to the soufflè and bake in a buttered dish very slowly for about 40 minutes. Serve at once.

(46)

TOMATO

A WHOLE book has been confined to this vegetable but here are a few recipes to stimulate the palate. The tomato is capable of a good deal more than we usually demand from it. Like the orange one can almost see the sun's energy in it. It is rich in Vitamin C, and naturally it is best eaten raw.

TOMATO PORTUGAISE

CUT some tomatoes into thin slices, cover with tasteless olive oil. Sprinkle over a little chopped spring onion and the smallest clove of garlic, salt and pepper and a little clear stock. Cook until just tender, only for a few minutes. Serve with chopped parsley, serve with fish or meat.

(47)

TOMATO BRANDINA

SKIN some large fine red tomatoes, cut in half and place each slice on a round piece of hot toast well buttered, the same size as the tomato, on each half. Place a mixture of cream, cheese, chopped celery and chopped onion on each tomato and cover with ordinary grated cheese. Grill slowly until a light brown. Curls of bacon as a decoration and sprigs of parsley, finish this dish.

(48)

TURNIPS

THIS vegetable is medicine and food together. There are many old fashioned recipes for using them for coughs and colds. The natural juice when extracted purifies the blood. It is full of calcium, (particularly the leaves). It should be steamed like carrots in preference to boiling. So when the recipe says boiling try steaming instead.

GLAZED TURNIPS

PEEL some turnips steam or put into boiling salt water, until nearly done. Cut into slices and sautè them in some hot butter until slightly brown. Add salt and pepper. Remove from pan piece by piece from the butter and cook in a little strong meat extract. Let all this simmer until turnips are nearly dry. Serve with chopped parsley.

(49)

TURNIP PIE

WASH a few new turnips and put into plenty of boiling water, slightly salted until cooked. Take out and peel and cut into thin slices put in a pie dish and sprinkle a little salt and pepper over them. Add a cupful of milk and cover with breadcrumbs and a little grated cheese. Put in an oven until nicely browned.

(50)

WATERCRESS

THIS vegetable is eaten far too little as there is no better cleanser of the blood stream than a diet of watercress. Rich in calcium, it is particularly good for children. Be careful where it comes from and do not forget to wash it in several bowls of fresh water. As a salad it is hard to beat, or used as a sandwich filling, and it is a lovely garnish for poultry and meat.

WATERCRESS SOUP

COOK a well washed bunch of watercress finely chopped in some good clear stock. Thicken with some flour and butter cooked together beforehand. Bring to boiling point and stir in some cream and milk. Add pepper and salt and serve hot.

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NOTES

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